



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

BOOK REVIEWS.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION. By Dr. Harald Höffding, Professor in the University of Copenhagen. Translated from the German Edition by B. E. Meyer. London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd., 1906. Pp. viii, 410.

There is an unmistakable directness of touch in the argument and analysis contained in this volume, which removes it from the sphere of mere speculation and gives it a characteristic quality of personal conviction. The effect on the reader is such as to disarm criticism from the outset and produce an attitude of respectful acquiescence. The author has written out of the fullness of his own experience of life, in the hope that it may be of significance to others to know what he has learned. And no one who is aware of the perplexities of the religious mood can read his sympathetic interpretation of its meaning without being grateful for this balanced and well-ordered statement of his conclusions. We may add to these general remarks that Prof. Höffding is singularly fortunate in his translator, who has produced a most readable rendering of the German version.

The interpretation of religion throughout the volume is governed by a single conception, which Prof. Höffding calls the "conservation of value." This conception he considers the fundamental "axiom" of all religious experience. The aim of the writer is to describe, to illustrate, and to justify this "axiom," and to show how it has operated in the formation of definite religious belief. From the outset he puts aside the attempt to connect the philosophy of religion with a general philosophical system; for "the work of the philosophy of religion will be most productive when religion and its manifestations . . . are illuminated by a process of philosophizing of which the main occupation is to decide whether or no we may expect to arrive at a conclusion" (p. 4). His position on this question of method does not seem altogether clear or consistent; for at one time he speaks of the religious problem as "falling under the fundamental problem" (p. 13); at another time of an "analogy" between the philosophical and religious problem (p. 385); while again throughout the work he seeks to maintain that there is continuity (p. 216), or at least no discontinuity, between the notion of "existence" and the security of the values on which religious experience lays stress.

Indeed, he goes so far at one stage in his discussion as to make the remark (which I take to be general), that "we shall always expect to find the development of religion based on a certain conception of reality. Man can have no religious feeling until he can to a certain extent systematize his observations of the world" (p. 137). Moreover, his own argument rests, as one might suppose, on some philosophical basis, a basis which at one point he speaks of as that of "critical monism" (p. 89). But while this seeming inconsistency hangs over the process of the discussion, and in a manner perhaps threatens the safety of his conclusions, Prof. Höffding is at any rate quite frank in admitting the limitations within which he works. He prefers to confine himself to an empirical analysis of the content of religious experience, an empirical verification of its first principle (the axiom of the conservation of value), and a psychological description of what that principle means.

He divides his discussion into three stages. In the first he examines the logical significance of the principle of value and of the conservation of all values, and distinguishes it from the logical character of the principles by which we endeavor to meet the difficulty set to the human mind of holding to unity in the midst of diversity. This constitutes the epistemological part of his problem, which he calls "Epistemological Philosophy of Religion." In the second stage he states the content and substance of religious experience as it has historically appeared. He gives what, roughly speaking, may be called a psychological analysis of the religious mind, and shows what is meant by its fundamental axiom, and what this involves. This discussion forms the "Psychological Philosophy of Religion," and is on the whole the most important section of the work. In the third stage he traces the connection between religious value and that other sphere of experience where the idea of value plays the chief rôle in forming the experience—morality. This part he calls the "Ethical Philosophy of Religion."

If we take the axiom as the centre of the whole discussion, we may say that the first section considers its formal character as a principle of experience, the second its material content, and the third its efficiency as a specific ground of activity.

The axiom of the conservation of value is conceived by the author after the analogy of the conservation of energy in physics. It asserts the "continuous conservation of value throughout all

transformations," just as the conservation of energy asserts that energy is never lost from the physical system by any process of change, but only transformed. It does not affect the axiom to say that increase in value is or may be a condition of its being preserved; for constancy of value and conservation of value are not the same thing. All the values that have existed may be conserved as well as the increased values which may arise in the course of experience. "Conservation" means that no value, whatever it be, utterly perishes from the world. "Value" again denotes the "property possessed by a thing" of either giving "immediate satisfaction" or "serving as a means of procuring it" (p. 12). Immediate value is the primary end, and by "primary" is meant first in importance, because conserving the ultimate and simplest needs of man. All other values are "mediate;" they are conditioned by the character of immediate values, and lead to the attainment of them more or less consciously and directly. The "needs," which determine what is to have value, themselves depend on man's "nature"; and as the needs vary indefinitely, values vary in quality and character with them. The "conservation" refers to *all* values, mediate and immediate. Since value thus covers all possible forms in which satisfaction can be obtained by man in his various relations to existence, it follows that the conservation of all values implies or is even "a form of the principle of the continuity of existence" (p. 216). It means that "fidelity prevails throughout existence," for "fidelity is conservation, continuity throughout all changes" (pp. 134, 216). Such conservation or fidelity is the axiom of religion, the "content" of religious "faith." Or, in other words, the religious attitude of experience rests upon and presupposes that the values which man assigns to existing things in virtue of the satisfactions they afford, will be guaranteed by the nature of existence itself, that they have an objective basis and justification, and not merely a subjective significance.

Now, there is no doubt that this does describe an essential element in the experience of religion, and is a legitimate way of stating its point of view. It has the merit of being comprehensive enough to include all types and forms of religion and to distinguish the religious mood *per se* from any other form of experience. For all other moods, science, morality, etc., are concerned in finding or creating values, not in conserving them, and certainly not in conserving *all* values. Indeed the other moods

may even proceed best by correcting and suppressing what has acquired a value; whence arises the conflict between the religious and *e. g.* the scientific mood. It gives also a concreteness and definiteness of character to religious experience which in these times of uncertainty the religious mind may very readily welcome. The great difficulty which the religious mind has to face is undoubtedly how to determine, and be assured of, the objectivity of the content and consequences of its "faith," how to be confident that its assertions hold of an objective ground, and are not the creations of subjective desire or imagination. Some kind of reciprocity between objective and subjective there must be in religion as in every mood of concrete experience; for, only if this reciprocity is found, is our mood a "reality," instead of either confusion or illusion. The object must be in some sense "independent" of us as well as related to us, if our experience is to be reliable and valid. In science and morality this objectivity of content is easily tested: for the objective world of "fact," the things perceived, and the social order, at once assert themselves over against our individual ideas, and our individual whims; and either check or confirm their course in very definite and determinable ways. But who is to tell us if our religious ideas are "correct," that our religious emotions are "justified?" The object to which we here stand related seems either to make no definite response, or to make a response only in such universal terms that every case is satisfied equally; each individual's interpretation of the response is as valid as another's, and is asserted to be so. But this implies that we seem to have no restraint whatsoever on our affirmations or denials, and no confirmation of their claims. Hence the liability of the religious mood to mere caprice in its assertions and its aims. There is undoubtedly here a real danger unless we have in some way a determinate relation on the part of the mind to a determinate object which in some sense is "independent" of it. Prof. Höffding's conception of a principle of the conservation of value does seem to indicate such an objectivity, and seems also to provide for the subjective variety of experience so characteristic of the religious life.

Yet it has to be noted that its very meaning seems to deprive it of any regulating or controlling efficacy on the religious mind. It does not prescribe what is or is not to have a value for religion. On the contrary, this is determined apart from religion, as such, altogether. Religion stamps with the mark of

finality or absoluteness what is *on other grounds* a source of satisfaction. Religion claims as a permanent factor in the nature of things what has to begin with a value for the individual life. It gives the form of eternity to a temporal validity. All the positive content of religion is derived from sources outside the religious axiom itself. More than this, it presupposes "that we have discovered by experience that there is something valuable" (p. 217). But if so, we come dangerously near to destroying any claim the religious mood has to be anything of significance in experience at all. For if the axiom does not *constitute* value, since that is settled by the nature of the satisfactions of which the individual is the source and the test; and if the axiom does not *regulate* what is to be regarded as of value, since that is done by other spheres of experience, what does the axiom do? It becomes a purely formal precept without any content of its own at all. If so, its objectivity seems to have no real effect on the individual life; for an objectivity that is not effective as a check or restraint on the course of the mind's conscious states is as good as non-existent. Nothing then separates it from either illusion or caprice. Moreover, on this view it is only the *claim* of the individual religious mind which saves the situation and creates the religious mood. This makes religion both in content and form purely subjective. Such a result, however, is directly opposed to the very meaning of the religious mood. For this seeks to give permanent objectivity to what has otherwise a value; and the religious individual appeals to the axiom to sustain his belief in any value that enters his life. Clearly, therefore, the axiom must derive its meaning from some other source than the individual mind. For if the position of the latter depends on the nature of the former, it is logically impossible to create the axiom from the individual mind.

This indeed comes out in Prof Höffding's further analysis. He maintains "that the axiom of the conservation of value is a form of the principle of the continuity of existence" (p. 216), *i. e.* has its ground *beyond* the individual mind in a wider form of existence. Elsewhere (pp. 134, 186), he identifies the principle of the conservation of value with "God" in the religious sense. And, generally, he argues that the scientific and religious moods would be reconciled if the principle of the unity and continuity of existence, which the former takes as an axiom and

seeks to establish in detail, were to coincide with the axiom of the conservation of value. Interpretation and estimation could then be identified. This certainly gets over the subjectivity of the axiom. And even if the ultimate reconciliation were in the long run an ideal to be aimed at, or yet never achieved, the objectivity would at all events be secured.

But such statements and suggestions as those just referred to, cannot be said to carry us far towards a solution of this difficulty, when we seek to make the trend of Prof. Höffding's argument consistent. The above expressions would seem in their very nature to carry objectivity with them, and secure the validity of religious judgments. "Existence," "Reality," "God," are surely "objective" if anything is. Prof. Höffding, however, not only does not find the content of the religious life from such a source, but, by his very interpretation of them, makes any use of them as the objective basis of religion impossible. For they themselves are subjective conceptual constructions. "Conceptions of existence" lie at the basis of religions, and the different conceptions of value help to determine different religious standpoints (p. 113). "The development of religion" is "based on a certain conception of reality." "Man can have no religious feeling until he can to a certain extent systematize his observations of the world" (p. 137). And if anything is needed to emphasize this subjectivity we are told that our conception of existence is never completed, and is necessarily incomplete (pp. 32, 259, 264), nay even "that our concept of reality is itself really an ideal concept" (p. 247). The religious mind undoubtedly seems to look on "God" as objective, as a supreme object of all judgments; and in discussing the religious life of different peoples, Prof. Höffding certainly seems to take the term in this sense. But in his own view, God is really the "predicate" of all religious judgments (p. 187). How, if this is so, he can at the same time speak of this as "that which supports and comprehends within itself all values" (p. 180) is difficult to see.

Moreover, even if we take Prof. Höffding at his word, it is not possible to make the argument quite convincing. Conceptions of existence give, he says, the basis of religious value. Such conceptions presumably must be, or claim to be, true, and so claim to fall within science. Yet he maintains (p. 244), that "if we could or ought to uphold no other views of existence than those which scientific inquiry can construct and prove, then the axiom

of the conservation of value must fall to the ground." Or, again, take the statement "the process of existence might be continuous without any continuity of value" (p. 245), and compare this with that above given: "the continuity of value is another form of the principle of unity in existence." Indeed the importance of conceptions of existence in the shaping of the religious life seems reduced to very little indeed. For, from the point of view of science, religion seems to get a living as best it can from the crumbs which may fall from the well-supplied table of the scientist. "If it be supposed that the innermost essence of existence¹ is exhausted when its empirical contents has been reduced to relations of identity, rationality and causality, then there is no room for faith. But such a view is insusceptible of proof. There always remains the possibility that the great rational and causal web of interrelations which science is gradually exposing to view may be the framework or the foundation for the unfolding, in accordance with the very laws and forms discovered by scientific inquiry, of a valuable content. The axiom of the conservation of value need assert nothing more and nothing other than this" (p. 245). "*There always remains the possibility,*" may not the other possibility be true as well? What is "at least possible" is separated by only a very sharp edge from the impossible. And how can the "axiom of the conservation of value" draw any content from such a "possibility," still more furnish any "vitality" of belief, or "produce" or "increase" value in the way Prof. Höffding describes elsewhere. Is religious experience to be based on taking a "perhaps" seriously for fact? The crumbs no doubt are always possible; but what if the rich man at the table of science is too careful or too well-mannered to drop any?

It seems ungrateful to make these complaints regarding an argument so rich in instruction; but it is difficult to get rid of the conclusion that from first to last the substance and form of religion have, on Prof. Höffding's theory, no genuine objective basis or immovable ground at all. We may call such a view as his "psychological," or "subjective" as we please; the name is not so serious as the positive result of the interpretation. And all the further development of his principle in the discussion of concrete historical religions, doctrines and procedure, bears out the

¹ What is meant by the "essence" of what is at best a concept?

same result. The applications of his theory, it should be said, form in some ways the most interesting and illuminating part of the work. We find here many of his best *aperçus*, which concentrate into a pithy expression the rich wisdom of a deep experience of life.

Perhaps Prof. Höffding seems nearer to the solution of the difficulty above referred to, and nearer also to the heart of his own position, when he deals with the bearing of religion on morality in the last part of the work. He points out on pp. 223-24 that the "ideal form of the axiom of the conservation of value . . . may be regarded as a kind of extension of the highest ethical principle." And again "religion tends to appear as a projection of the ethical." The values of religion are secondary and depend on certain primary values, since religion presupposes the experience of value, of those primary values "our experience of life has taught us to know and maintain." What these latter are is not and apparently cannot be definitely determined. "The values in the conservation of which a man believes will be those which he regards as the highest. These, however, differ widely in different cases among different men living under different historical conditions" (p. 218). When "we inquire as to the value of the faith in the conservation of value, the answer cannot be given by religion only . . . The necessary condition for the justification of religion is that neither force nor time be withdrawn from ethical work. On the other hand religion will gain in positive value if it can be seen to be a condition which enables us to produce and discover values within the world of experience" (p. 331). Thus it is maintained that "religion in its historical development, as well as in its motives, its contents, and its value, points back to ethical presuppositions, even when it has all the appearance of serving as a basis for ethics" (*ibid*). The "superstructure of a religion will depend on the ethical standpoint" (p. 374).

It appears, then, from this that the ultimate ground of religion is the ethical life, and that religion is also an "extension" of it. Now, undoubtedly this gets rid of the above subjectivity characteristic of this interpretation of religion. For thus there is introduced into the religious life the objectivity which comes from the compulsion of the social order and of our relation to other men. And in the realization of the ethical ideal "ethics itself becomes religious, for it is here working for the all-holiest"

(p. 375). "Religion and ethics ultimately meet in the conception of the holiest" (ibid). The ethical includes the religious.

It will be noted how closely this is akin to Kant's conception of religion and also to the later Greek view of religion. Indeed in the working of this out, "we must always find our greatest model in the Greek way of life."

The difficulty that here remains is (1) to explain away the apparent circle in the argument that religion depends on and gets its justification from ethics, and yet that ethical values are conserved in and by religion; and (2) to assign on this view any proper and peculiar function to religion at all. It seems a mere confirmation of what ethical values determine; it is living *sub specie æternitatis*, the same experience that is primarily lived *sub specie temporis*. But a value is none the more valid and none the more valuable because it is conserved. Indeed it is not valuable because it is conserved, it is conserved because it is valuable. Moreover, a value need not be conserved at all: it will remain a value none the less. "Value is not absolutely dependent on its own conservation" (p. 272). This may not seem quite consistent with Prof. Höffding's other contention that the axiom of religion maintains that no value altogether disappears from existence; but at any rate it is true. What then does religion specifically consist in? In stamping finite values with the hall-mark of eternity? How from such a formal principle is it at all possible to develop the rich and varied content of religious history and religious experience? But if it does not consist in thus giving finality to the temporal, in, so to say, giving the finishing touch to finite experience, it is difficult to see what is left us, or from what source it will draw the inspiration for its unique position in human life. The difficulty is only increased when we gather from another passage that there may be no necessity for religion in the ethical life at all. "Ethically considered the command is 'make life, the life thou knowest, as valuable as possible.' Whether the striving to fulfil this command necessarily presupposes a belief in the conservation of value in a certain definite form, is a question which will receive different answers from different persons according to their differing experiences" (p. 381).

Finally, there is some justification for raising the further question as to the source and goal of the values which are conserved. And here Prof. Höffding's answer is a little perplexing after all that he has said about the necessity for scientific explanation on

the one hand, and the importance of estimation or evaluation on the other. He says in one passage: "I for my part see no reason why we should demand at all costs an answer [to the question, "whence comes the valuable and whither goes it?"] which shall take us beyond what science can teach us by means of its latest hypotheses" (p. 376). Yet in another passage he says, "It may be that poetry is a more perfect expression of the highest than any scientific concept ever could be" (*ibid.*). Surely both these statements cannot be true at the same time. Both no doubt may be complementary; but in that case the first should certainly be qualified to admit of supplementation. On his view it seems absolutely essential to take up *both* positions, and not one to the exclusion of the other. Even so, we have no reasoned solution of the situation created from the first by distinguishing and indeed opposing explanation and estimation. And such a solution one may fairly expect from a philosophical interpretation of religious life. No doubt the "last word" in any interpretation "must lie with personality." What one feels is that, for religion, this seems both the first and the last word and ought to be so considered in determining the nature of religious experience.

J. B. BAILLIE.

King's College, Aberdeen.

STOIC AND CHRISTIAN IN THE SECOND CENTURY. A comparison of the ethical teaching of Marcus Aurelius with that of contemporary and antecedent Christianity. By Leonard Alston, M. A., sometime scholar of Trinity College. Melbourne: Burney Prizeman, 1904 and 1905; London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1906.

A comparative study of Stoicism and Christianity, in the spirit of modern historical research, objective, impartial and sympathetic, is a *desideratum*. We are still in the stage of preliminary investigations; and the best-equipped student would long hesitate, were he asked to define the place actually held in the Græco-Roman world by the two religious faiths in the days when they were rivals. Whoever presents new material, or a more perfect interpretation of already known facts, renders a real service. There is no reason why an author should not confine himself to the second century, if he chooses to do so. That is the period when these systems came into conscious conflict with each other. Nor